

THE
HAPPY HOUR
OF
CHRIST'S
Quickening Voice.

A
SERMON,

Preached immediately before
The Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's
Supper, August 5th, 1744. Together with a
Discourse both before and at the Tables, and
also after the solemn action was over.

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The Happy Hour, &c.

JOHN V. 25.

Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

I THINK there is no lover of Christ here, but will wish, in his heart, upon the hearing of this text, that this may be indeed the day and the hour wherein this word may come to pass. There is not a dead soul, nor a dead case amongst all this company, but this scripture opens a door of hope to it. The communion table, we have in view, is not for the *dead*, but for the *living*: this sacrament is called the EUCHARIST, a *thanksgiving*, a *song of praise*; but, who are capable to sing it? Why, it is said, Isa. xxxviii. 19. *The living, the living, he shall praise thee.* But if we be a dead company this day, the end and design of the sacrament will be lost, and God will not get praise amongst us. If any here be fearing lest this be the case, and saying, O minister! is there any ground to hope that such *dead and dry bones shall live*? We answer, Yes, yes: there is hope; for the Lord of life hath given you this word for it, on which you may build your faith and hope,

both that a quickening hour is coming, and a quickening hour is come; *Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of God, and they that hear, shall live.*

Our Lord's having cured a man here of his thirty-eight years infirmity on the Sabbath day, the Jews maliciously persecute him as a Sabbath-breaker, because he ordered the man to *rise, and take up his bed and walk*, that thus the work of God, in this miraculous cure, might be manifested to the onlookers: but, under a mask of zeal for the Sabbath, they sought to darken the light of that miraculous work; not being able to disprove of the work in itself, they quarrel the circumstance of time, and represent it as being a violation of the Sabbath. Religion was never more violently persecuted than under a mask for religion. Men pretend, yea, and think they do God service, even when they kill the servants; as they did the Master himself. Our Lord having answered his accusers, by saying, *My Father worketh hitherto and I work.* ver. 17. they were yet more enraged and exasperated, because he said, *God was his Father, making himself equal with God;* ver. 18. Christ was so far from refusing this charge they laid against him, that he thence takes occasion more plainly to assert this truth; for, he proves himself to be the *natural son of God*, by solid arguments, of which this is one in the words of our text; wherein he ascribes to himself another work, which none but the Son of God, equal with the Father, can effectuate.

The words contain two general points. 1. The serious matter here asserted; *The dead shall*

hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. 2. The solemn manner in which it is asserted, *Verily, verily I say unto you*, it shall be so.

1st, As to the matter here asserted, it relates to the *spiritual resurrection of souls*; this is evident from the context: in the preceeding verse it is said, *He that hears my words, and believes on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life*. This seems exactly to agree with what is here said of *hearing his voice*, called in the former verse, *a hearing his words*. Verses 28th and 29th speak plainly of the *second and general resurrection*, of which he says, *Not it now is, as here; but it is coming*: but this verse, together with the former, speaks of that *spiritual resurrection*, called the *first resurrection*, Rev. xx. 5. and the *quickening* mentioned, Eph. ii. 1. which comes by hearing the voice of Christ, in the gospel, so as to believe in him: neither is this verse a vain repetition of what was said in the former, though the matter is very serious and momentous, and deserves to be resumed; yet the repetition is with a variety of different circumstances: for,

2^{dly}, As to the solemn manner in which it is asserted, it is under the form of an oath, with an AMEN, AMEN; *Verily, verily*: and with an express mention of the *time and season* wherein his word shall have this effect; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, &c.* It is observable, that this is the third time that Christ uses this asseveration, *Verily, verily*, in his answer to the cavil of the Jews here, against his being the Son of God, ver. 19, 24, 25.; and

each of these asseverations are brought in with a relation, especially to his being the God that quickens the dead, *that quickens whom he will*, ver. 21.; *that quickens dead souls by his word*; and *and that makes them hear his voice, and live*, as in the text. Such a solemnity of speech is not used about the *resurrection of dead bodies at the last day*, spoken of ver. 28, 29. Why, it seems to point out how much his heart is set upon the work of raising *dead souls from death to life*, wherein his *power*, and the *exceeding greatness* thereof, is more exerted, than it will be in raising the dead out of their graves: and he speak with repeated solemnity, both to shew the greatness of the subject he speaks of, and to excite the assured faith of these that have ears to hear; *Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.*

More particularly, in the words you may observe these six things following.

1. The *sad case* sinners are in, they are *dead*; so are all by nature.

2. The *suitable relief*, and notable privilege promised, namely, *life*; they *shall live*.

3. The *powerful mean* of this spiritual life, namely, *the voice of the son of God*.

4. The *method* of the application of this blessed mean, namely, *the hearing* of this voice of the Son of God.

5. The *certainty* of this relief, or the assurance given that it shall take effect; we are assured of it by a double oath, *Verily, verily*; and a double promise out of the mouth of Jesus, *I say unto you, the dead SHALL hear, and they that hear SHALL live.*

6. We have the happy *season* fixed for all this, or the time set to an *hour*; and that faith and hope may not be faint and languid, but have something in hand, as well as in hope, something in hand, as well as something future to look too; therefore, the happy hour, on which it depends a happy eternity, is represented both as a *coming* hour, and a *present* hour: "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that here shall live."

Here is a good foundation for faith and hope this day. I might here

Observe, "That the happy time wherein the dead shall certainly hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live, is a time set to an hour."

It is not only set to a *year*, called the acceptable year of the Lord; and to a *day*, called a day of power; but in a manner to an *hour* of a day; yea, to a *moment* of an hour: we read of watering every moment. There is no moment of time, wherein we may not look to Christ for life, and for a quickening power, and a quickening hour; for, "the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

But, because the particulars here are many, I pass over the formality of a doctrinal proposition, and design only two things.

I. A short explication of the particulars in the text.

II. The application thereof.

I. For the explication thereof, I shall, as the Lord may assist, offer a word upon each of the six

particulars I have just now mentioned, as contained in the text.

1st, Here is the sad case we are all into by nature; we are DEAD men, and in a state of death. You shall not surely die, said Satan, though you eat the forbidden fruit; but he is a liar: for, behold we are all surely dead; and that in a twofold sense, viz. both relative and real.

1. In a *relative* sense, by virtue of our relation to the first Adam, and the violated law or covenant of works: we are relatively and legally dead, being under the sentence of death, Rom. v. 12, 15. We are guilty, cursed, condemned creatures; and the curse of the law and wrath of God as an enemy.

2. We are dead in a *real* sense; the sentence of the law being in part executed, and that both as to body and soul. As to the *body*; it is now subject to death, and to all the miseries and maladies that are the forerunners thereof: yea, and in hazard of hell-fire, and the torment of the second death for ever: The wages of sin is death. And as to the *soul*, it is many ways dead; dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. spiritually and eternally dead; and liable to everlasting separation from God; for death may be viewed, as either *external*, that makes the body lifeless; or *internal*, that makes the soul graceless; or *eternal*, which makes both the soul and body for ever comfortless.

In natural death, the body is *without* the soul; so we are dead men, because our souls are without God.—Death *defaces* the body; so hath sin defaced our souls, and deprived us of the image of God.—In death a man loses his natural *heat* and *warmth*; so our soul hath lost all heat and

warmness of affection towards God.—In death a man loses all *right* to his goods; they pass to the next heir: so by sin, we have lost all right to any blessing; far less have we any right to the heavenly inheritance.—A dead body hath not the use of *understanding* in natural things; so the dead soul has not the use of understanding in spiritual things; “The natural man receive not the things of the Spirit of God.”—A dead body hath no *fitness* for natural actions: so dead souls have no fitness for spiritual actions; they are just a burden to them.—A dead body can take no *pleasure* in natural things: as little pleasure can a dead soul take in spiritual things. A dead body cannot *raise* itself to life; as little can a dead soul.

Christ will have little employment here this day, as a quickening Spirit, among these that do not know and believe that they are *surely dead*. All the saints *that* are quickened by the Son of God, in so far as they know they are past from death unto life, 1 John iii. 14. in this they acknowledge they were *surely dead*.—All true *believers*, according to the verse preceding my text, do, by faith, pass from death to life; which declares, that while they remain in unbelief, they are *surely dead*.—The necessity of regeneration, and of being born again, John iii. 3. declares that we are *surely dead*, and need to be created a new in Christ Jesus.—The end and design of the *gospel*, which is the word of life, proclaims that we are *surely dead*.—The end and design of *faith*, and all the exhortations to come to Christ for life, do proclaim that we are *surely dead*.—And the end of Christ's death, which we celebrate the memorial of this day, proclaims that we are *surely dead*; 2 Cor. v.

14. If one died for all, then were all dead.—Why, the devil is proved to be a liar, with a witness: and if we believe in Christ this day, we will first believe the contrary of the devil's lye, even that we are surely dead; yea, twice dead, *viz.* both by original sin imputed and inherent; “The guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of your whole nature; and also by innumerable actual sins, miseries, &c.” Perhaps there is scarce any here that hath formerly been made alive in Christ Jesus, but they are fallen into a dead case again, though delivered from a state of death, a dead state; yet, perhaps, they are in a dead frame, and need a new quickening hour. Are we surely dead? Then, *adly.* The next thing to be considered, is the suitable relief, exhibited and promised, namely, *Life*; The dead shall live. The case is sad and deplorable, that we are all dead men; but the cure is suitable, the privilege is great, and agreeable to the case; *Life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel*, exhibiting Christ as the life; and the life that is to be had in him answers exactly to the death, or dead state that we are into by nature. Are we in a *relative* sense legally dead, and in a *real* sense spiritually dead? Here, in answer thereto, there is,

1. A relative life here imported; a life of justification in Christ, as the *Lord our righteousness*, giving the pardon of sin; “To him gave all the prophets witness, that thro' his name, whosoever believeth in him shall have the remission of sin,” *Acts x. 43.* Removing the curse of the law; “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, *Gal. iii. 13.*; being

made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.—*Delivering from the sentence of the law, so as there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. Reconciling us unto God, and making peace by the blood of his cross. Col. i. 20. Taking away the curse of all temporal plagues, and making all things work together for their good; taking away also the sting of death, and the victory of the grave, and making us "heirs, according to the hope of eternal life, by being justified by his grace," Tit. iii. 7.*

2. A real, spiritual life is here imported, whereby we pass from real spiritual death; "We, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened," Eph. ii. 1. For, we come by faith, to be united to Christ, who is our life; and being united to this living head, we must live: "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John v. 12. This life is the contrivance of God the Father; the purchase of God the Son; and the alone work of God the Holy Ghost, by the means of gospel ordinances; it is a spiritual change upon the soul; whereby the shape of iniquity and sin is in every faculty partly removed, and the shape of holiness and righteousness put on: it carries in it deliverance from the power of sin and corruption, and being possessed of the new heart, the new spirit, and all spiritual blessing: it is the Spirit, and his graces dwelling in the soul, "as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life," John iv. 14. This relative and real life is just that everlasting life spoke of in the verse preceding; "He that hears my words, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is pal-

fed from death to life." It is a restoration of all, and more than we lost in the first Adam, by the second Adam; his being made of God to us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. We lost the *knowledge* of God; this is restored in Christ, as our wisdom: we lost the favour of God; it is restored in Christ, as our righteousness: we lost the image of God; it is restored in and by Christ, as our sanctification: we lost the enjoyment of God; but it is restored both in grace here and glory hereafter, in Christ as our complete redemption. Here is that blessed pass from death to life? *The dead shall live, and live for ever*; for, all these parts of life are everlasting: they are but the beginnings of eternal life, which will be consummate in heaven; for, as Christ is the bread of life, so he that *eats this bread shall live for ever*, John vi. 58. The dead shall hear and live; as it is said, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy dead men shall live, my dead body shall they arise," and live for ever; for, every property of this life bends towards and stretches forth unto everlasting happiness and glory; where there is life there is motion, appetite, and growth: this spiritual life moves to, and breathes after, longs for, and grows up to glory. Christ's dead body mystical must arise, and live for ever with the glorious Head; for he hath said, in the forecited, Is. xxvi. 19. "Awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust;" and his word must take effect. Therefore,

3dly, The next thing in the words is, The powerful means of this spiritual life; and this is *The voice of the Son of God*. Here is two things observable.

1. The person speaking, the glorious Preacher; namely, the *Son of God*; the second Person of the glorious Trinity, clothed with our nature, and

clothed with the office of a Prophet, that he might preach good tidings to the meek, Isa. lxi. 1. He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, sent to declare the Father's mind; "For no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 14, 18. And for this end he was declared to be the Son of God by the Father, with an audible voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him," Matth. iii. 17. This was repeated several times; and then after all, he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4. The preacher here then is the Son of God, equal with the Father; which here he is proving himself to be against the Pharisees, who accused him for asserting it; but though he was clothed with his Father's commission, yet, he and his Father are one; and none of them ever thought it a robbery, that he should be equal with God; even he "who was born King of the Jews, of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all blessed for ever." Here is the person speaking, the glorious Preacher.

2. Here is the joyful sound of his words; namely, The voice of the Son of God: by which I understand, The word of his grace, accompanied with the power of his Spirit. And so his voice is to be considered either as external; that is, his ministerial voice, in the preaching of the gospel, which is his word; and the gospel minister is called his mouth, Jer. xv. 19. Thou shalt be my mouth; hence it is said, He that heareth you, heareth me, or as

internal and efficacious, while the gospel comes not in word only, but in power. The external ministerial voice of Christ is the organ and instrument of conveying his almighty voice through the ear to the heart; there is here a voice within a voice; an internal efficacy, giving life and power, as it were to the sound of ram-horns, to make the walls of Jericho fall to the ground, even all high towers of sin and enmity in the sinner's heart to give way; thus the weapons of the gospel "are not carnal, but mighty through God, for the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4."

But more particularly, by the voice of the Son of God, I understand his word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, Eph. i. 3. The whole word of God, in the scripture, is his voice; as also the voice of the rod, the voice of the Spirit, the voice of conscience, the voice of providence, is his voice as God; yet there is a voice of his in the gospel, that is peculiarly his voice, as he is the Son of God, and the Sent of God, to be our Saviour; by which, he makes way to the heart of sinners, and opens it, Rev. iii. 20. It is the "voice of our beloved that knocks, saying, Open to me," Song v. 2. It is called the joyful sound, which, whosoever hears and knows are blessed persons; *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound*, Psalm lxxxix. 15. It sounded sweetly afterwards in the ears of Abraham, saying, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. which is called the *gospel preached to Abraham*, Gal. iii. 8. And, indeed, here is a part of spiritual wisdom, to distinguish betwixt God's voice in the law, and CHRIST's voice in the gospel; betwixt God speaking in the law by commands and threaten-

ings, and the Son of God, the Christ of God, speaking in the gospel of *grace* and *promise*. The voice of God in the *law*, is like a voice of *grumbling thunder*; by this is the knowledge of sin and wrath, and so of the need of a Saviour; wherefor the law is called a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, Gal. iii. 24. But the voice of Christ in the *gospel*, is like the *calm still voice*, that Elijah heard; and it hath neither law, nor wrath, nor death in it, but mere grace, and life, and salvation. Mercy and truth meet together, and kiss each other here: for, "The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17.—The law is a word of *wrath* and *condemnation*, opening up the sentence of death passed against a sinner, saying, "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10." But the voice of Christ in the gospel hath not a word of wrath or condemnation in it, but *life*, and *salvation*, and *absolution*; for, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17.

Indeed, ordinarily the Lord makes use of the law, in a subserviency to the gospel, and so conveys fear and dread, and conviction of sin and wrath, by which he paves the way; but the proper voice of Christ, as he is the *Son of God*, the Saviour and Redeemer come to mount Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, is a voice that sounds nothing but love, grace, mercy, salvation to the greatest sinner that hears the gospel. The voice of the Son of God here is a voice of pardon, to guilty sinners, saying, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquities, and will remember

thy sins no more. It is a voice of healing to diseased sinners, saying, I am the Lord that healeth thee. It is a voice of Salvation to lost sinners, saying, "Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost." It is a voice of *cleansing* to polluted sinners, saying, Behold there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. This voice is the voice of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and committing to us the word of reconciliation. It is a sound of good news to all people, that to us a Saviour is born, which is Christ the Lord. It is the voice of a Friend in heaven, and a wonderful Lover; a voice to be heard sounding over the top of all the mountains of sin, and guilt, and separation; "The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh, skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills, Song ii. 8."

I cannot now stand to give the properties and effects of this voice, which may afterwards occur. We may be sure, it is a voice full of majesty, divine majesty, declarative that it is the voice of the Son of God; when it is heard it fills the soul with awful impressions of the majesty of God. It is a voice full of mercy, divine mercy: also, it is a joyful sound of mercy to a miserable sinner; salvation is conveyed with it. It is a voice full of power, divine power; for, it is the rod of his strength sent out of Zion, whereby his people are made willing in the day of his power. And so it is a voice full of life: it is a vital voice, even the vital breath of the Son of God, whereby the dead are made to hear and live; for, it is the living and life giving voice of the Son of God: why, this voice is no less than the Son of God himself, speak-

ing by his word and Spirit, and issuing out his royal orders, his powerful command, and sovereign will, that the dead rise and live : and it is the animating vital breath of the omnipotent God in Christ, quickening dead souls.

4thly, The *fourth* thing then that the text leads to, is, The *method* of the *application* of this powerful mean of life, namely HEARING of this voice ; *The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live.* The hearing spoke of in these words, is not the outward hearing of the *ear*, but the inward hearing of *faith* ; a hearing the voice, not of men, but of God ; nor of God absolutely, but of God in Christ, the voice of the *Son of God*. It is a hearing accompanied with that believing spoke of in the preceeding verse ; and the hearing spoke of, *Isa. lv. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live.*—And it imports these four things.

1. The objective *external* revelation in a divine testimony ; *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. x. 17.

2. It imports an *internal* revelation of what is outwardly revealed ; for, God “ reveals them to us by his Spirit, whereby we know the things freely given us of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. “ He revealed his Son in me, says Paul, Gal. i. 16. The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our heart, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory.”

3. It imports an *assent of faith* to the divine testimony, in the truth and goodness of what is revealed ; either concerning the *person* of the Mediator, the promised Messiah, saying, with the Samaritans, John iv. 42. “ They say to the woman,

Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world :” or concerning his *doctrine* and *promise*. This hearing of faith is an assent to the truth and goodness of Christ’s *doctrine*, as it is the message of God ; it is a receiving his testimony, and a setting to the seal that God is true ; and that what is true, is also good, and *worthy of all acceptation*, 1 Tim. i. 15. This is *a receiving of the truth in the love of it*, 2 Thess. ii. 10. And this hearing is also an assent to the truth and goodness of the *promise*, as *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ ; “ not staggering at it thro’ unbelief, but being strong in faith, giving glory to God.” And it is an assent with cordial, close, particular application ; for, it is *with the heart man believes unto righteousness*, Rom. x. 10. And being persuaded we *embrace the promise*, Heb. xi. 13. ; and believe the message of life and salvation to us in particular, saying, *We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved*, Acts xv. 11. And rest upon the power and faithfulness of God, for the accomplishment of all his words of grace ; *being fully persuaded that he that hath promised is able to perform*, Rom. iv. 21.

4. It imports such a hearing of his voice, as to *apprehend* and *acknowledge the divinity* of that voice ; as a voice declarative of his DEITY, and declarative of his being the Son of God, equal with the Father : “ It is the will of God that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, Jo. v. 23.” A believing ear who hears his voice, honours him in the divinity of his *person*, as the Son of God ; in the divinity of his *offices*, as the sent and sealed of God ; in the divinity

of his *blood* and *righteousness*, as the blood of God, and the righteousness of God; in the divinity of his *word*, as the word of God; and thus the divinity of his *voice*, as the voice of God, the voice of the Son of God.

Concerning this hearing of the *voice* of the Son of God, we offer the following six remarks.

(1.) The voice of a man strikes the *ear* with an external sound; but the voice of the Son of God strikes the *heart* with an internal efficacy and energy. To hear the voice of the Son of God, then, is not only a hearing with the ear, but a believing with the heart; *The dead shall hear; and they that hear shall live.*

(2.) All that *hear, shall live*; but, indeed, all that are *dead, will not hear*: for, many have ears, and hear not; and hearing, they do not hear in the sense I have explained: but *all that the Father hath given me*, says Christ, *shall come unto me*; all whose ears God bores and opens, to take up the voice of his Son Jesus Christ, which quickens them.

(3.) Yea, Christ here distinctly commends and extols a twofold *grace* and *virtue* of his voice; the *dead shall hear* the voice; and, it being heard, they *shall live*. It is no less preter-natural for the dead to *hear*, than it is for the dead to *live*; it is equally above nature to effectuate the one as the other; but it points out the method of the application of divine grace, and the order of the Spirit's operation. Sovereign efficacious grace, makes first the dead to *hear* the voice of the Son of God, and then the hearer *shall live*: the almighty hand of God, first *bore the ear* of the soul; and then, by the bored ear, lets in life to it.

(4.) But these are the *secret effects* of divine power.

er; the Lord speaks as he did to Isaiah, chap. viii. 11. *With a strong band*, making the voice sound to the centre of the soul. What is spoken only to the ear, dies in the ear; but this still voice of the Spirit, makes its entrance by secret passages into the heart, on which it leaves a stamp and impress of God. Others hears the sound of words and syllables, as well as they; but they do not hear the voice of the Son of God, touching, and reaching, catching, quickening, and captivating their whole soul.

(5.) It is no *delusive* *maraculous* voice, sounding into the natural ear, and giving an imaginary idea and representation of Christ, *as a man*, so and so glorious and comely; no, no: may God deliver his people from such Satanical delusions, too much supported by some in our day: but here there is no sound of human voices, no sight of human shapes; but a *spiritual view* of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as he is the *wisdom of God*, and the *power of God*; and a spiritual hearing of his quickening word of grace in the gospel, "coming not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5."

(6.) It is God's *propheying* upon the dead and dry bones, saying, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord, Ezekiel xxxvii. 4. Come from the four winds, O breathe; and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," verse 6. The same words are heard by others, but not with the same power and efficacy; for, now the *secrets of the heart are manifest*; and God is acknowledged to be in *that word of a truth*, 1 Cor. xiv. 25. The power of Christ comes along with the voice of the preacher; and there is no more power to resist, because in the voice of men they hear the voice of God: and

till it comes to this, the word hath no saving operation on the soul; yea, till it come to this, people have eyes, and see not; and ears, and hear not. Isa. vi. 9. Yea, the gospel to them is the *savour of death*, not of life.

5thly, The next thing is, The **CERTAINTY** of this relief, of this quickening of dead sinners; or the assurance given that it *shall* take effect. And now a door of faith and hope is here opened to all the dead souls in this house; none of the dead are here excepted in this dispensation of gospel grace: assurance is given *that the dead shall bear and live*; and that,

1. In general, with a Thus saith the Lord, it shall be; I say it unto you, saith Christ. Why, who is the speaker, but the *Son of God*, equal with the Father, *with whom are the words of eternal life*? He that spake the world out of nothing into being is the speaker here; and shall not his word take effect? Here is a foundation for the assurance of faith, namely, the testimony of God speaking in his word. God is invisible; and there is no other glass wherein we can savingly see him, but the word, 2 Cor. iii. 18. God is an infinite Spirit, and cannot be seen with bodily eyes, nor heard with bodily ears, nor felt with bodily hands; sense cannot perceive him, and reason darkened by the fall, gives but obscure, imperfect, and unbecoming thoughts of him: for God, and *the things of God*, are *foolishness to the natural man*——We must look to God therefore in a word, a saying, a faithful saying; such as, *That Christ came to save sinners*, and to quicken dead sinners; and here he says it, *That the dead shall bear his voice, and live*. Our faith stands not upon *the wisdom of men*, but the

power of God; that is, upon the divine testimony; which proves itself to be powerful, by commanding the assent of the soul to it, upon its own authority, as being the word of God.

2. The assurance is given not only thus in general, with a *thus saith the Lord*, but also with a *solemnity of speech*, wherewith his word is accompanied, for bearing it home upon our hearts: why, here he delivers his word with two *verilies*, and with two *shall be's*.

(1.) With two VERILIES; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, &c." He that is the AMEN, the faithful and true witness, makes frequent use of this form of an oath: it is the holy oath of a holy Jesus, saying, AMEN, AMEN. *Amen* is his name; and *Amen, Amen* is his doubled oath: and we may say, "Because he could swear by no greater, he swears by himself, That the dead shall hear his voice and live." We may be assured of what he *says*, and shall not we be assured of what he *swears*? We have sometimes God swearing by his *life*; or "as he lives, that he hath no pleasure in the death of sinners, Ezek. xxxiii. 11." And here we have the SON of God swearing by himself, that dead sinners *shall live*.

(2.) With two SHALL BE'S. Assurance is here given; for, there are two *shall's* in the text; *The dead SHALL hear; and they that hear SHALL live*. Here is a twofold promise, with a twofold Amen. We have not only elsewhere his *commanding* word, to found our duty and warrant; *Hear, and your souls shall live*: but here we have his *promising* word, to found our faith, hope, encouragement; "The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live."

There is a necessity ; the promise must be accomplished upon a number of dead sinners : " Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, John x. 16." *I must bring them, and they shall hear, and they shall live.* Here is a more solemnity than in that *creating* word, that said, *Let there be light, and there was light* : that was but one word, *Let it be* ; and the effect followed ; but here there are two words ; *it shall be, it shall be* : two *shall be's* ; *they shall hear, and they shall live.* Why did God speak but once, and it was done, when he made all things out of nothing ? And why does he speak more than once when he is to make all things new ? Why, indeed his heart is more set upon this new creation work of redemption, than upon that of the old creation ; and his glory is more concerned in it : the glory of his power, mercy, and truth, and all is here concerned. In that work he was an absolute God, having nothing to oppose or resist him ; but here is the concern of a God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself ; reconciling a rebellious world, and reviving a dead world : therefore it is not only a command, but a promise, repeated many a time ; and here repeated twice in one text, *The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live* ; and undoubtedly it shall take effect : " God hath spoken once, yea, twice have we heard this, that power belongeth to the Lord ; also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, Psalm lxii. 11, 12." It is a God of power that utters this word of grace and mercy.—O ! may dead souls here lay hold upon the double assurance he gives, that *they shall hear, and shall live.*—But when may this be expected ? Why,

6thly, The *sixth* and *last* thing I observed in the text, is, the HAPPY SEASON fixed for all this work of his, who says in the context, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, verse 17. The time is set to an *hour*: *The hour cometh, and now is, when it shall be.*

1. To take a more *general* view of this. Our Lord here speaks, as it were, of a thing unknown and unusual; and, indeed, the new promulgation of the gospel, in the New-testament dispensation of it, and the sudden resurrection of a dead world by it, was a new thing; and we find the world was amazed at his unusual doctrine. It is said, Mark i. 27. "They were all amazed, in so much that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" And, when Paul preached the resurrection of the dead, Acts xvii. 2, 3. some of the philosophers, of the Epicureans and Stoics, said, *He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods*, verse 18. Why? *Because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.* If it be asked here, Did not the word of God always give life unto men, even under the Old-testament dispensation? The answer may be this, That the doctrine of the law and prophets, since it was destined for the people of God, the office of it was rather to nourish up those that were already quickened, and made his people, than to recover them from death as a visible church: but with reference to the gospel-dispensation, there was a different reason for it; the Gentiles, that were not the people of God, but *aliens from the common wealth of Israel*, and quite *without God*, were to be made his

people; and, in this respect, to be brought from *death to life*, Eph. ii. 11, 12. But then,

2. To take a more particular view of the time and season spoke of in the text. It relates not merely to the *gospel dispensation*, whereby people are brought to be a visible church, and so enjoy an hour of grace, or a day of salvation; but it relates to the *glorious ministration of the Spirit*, accompanying the dispensation of the word, 2 Cor. iii. 8. It is not only an *hour* that he *sets to us*, saying, *Now* is the excepted time of coming to Christ; but it is an hour that Christ *sets to himself*, for his coming in the power of his Spirit, to quicken dead souls, by the vital breath of his word, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, &c."

Here is a twofold hour, for the faith and hope of gospel-hearers to work upon; a future hour, and a present hour.

(1.) Here is a future hour, or a coming hour; *The hour is coming: Verily, verily, I say unto you, the quickening hour is coming; I am on my way.* O! poor soul, that hath long been looking for a remarkable *hour of life from the dead*, and a *day of power*, and thinks it is never yet come; the hour is set from all eternity: the time is fixed; and *He who waits to be gracious*, doth patiently wait for it, Isa. xxx. 18. He that gave wisdom to the storks and swallows, the turtles and the cranes, to know their appointed seasons, and observe the time of their coming, he well knows the fittest season, and most proper time for his coming. Christ said, in some other cases, *Mine hour is not yet come*; this says, He hath his hour, for which we are to wait upon him in the use of appointed means: he hath

his *calling* hour, in which *he calls his sheep, as it were, by name*, and calls them effectually; his *quicken*ing hour, his *saving* hour, his *sealing* hour, his *assist*ing hour, his *comfort*ing hour, his *strengthen*ing hour, his *restor*ing hour, and at last his *glorify*ing hour, when he comes to receive them to himself, to be for ever with him.

Our Lord many times defers many of his gracious actions; yea, always defers them to the fittest season; and that for the manifestation of his *majesty* and *sovereignty*; that it may appear to be the hour that he hath fixed, and the day he himself hath made; "This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it," Ps. cxviii. 24.—And for the manifestation of his infinite *power*: that it may appear, "This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes," Psal. cxviii. 23.—Also he does so, with reference unto *us*, that his quickening mercy may be the more wonderful, and the more welcome to us; he comes when he sees *our power is gone, and there is none shut up or left*. He comes in a *time of need*, in the nick of extremity; that when he remembers *us in our low estate*, we may see and say, That "his mercy endureth for ever; I was brought low, and he helped me."—Yea he defers many times his coming to exercise his peoples *graces*, and excite them to their prayers and duties. O poor drooping soul, the voice of Christ is indeed worth the hearing; but what think you if he be wanting to hear your voice? "O my dove that are in the clefts of the rocks,—let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, Song ii. 14." He defers sometimes your sweet and sensible hearing of his voice, till he hear your voice: let your hearts then cry for his coming.

And since he says, *Verily, verily, the hour is coming*, O wait his hour; it is a great sin to limit the holy One of Israel to your time and hour: waiting gives glory to God's sovereignty, who comes when he pleases. It gives God the glory of his power, who works when he will: it gives him the glory of his truth and faithfulness, knowing that all things, even the delaying his coming, will work together for good, while we judge him faithful who had promised.

You see then what advantage it is to our faith, that our Lord Jesus here speaks of a *future* hour, the hour is *coming*. O then let us wait his time, without limiting him; and believe that he, *that shall come, will come*: but he that believes makes not haste.

(2.) He speaks of a *present* hour; "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear, and live:" And now it is the hour, says Christ. This is a part of the voice of the Son of God to us just now: and therefore, though we may not limit him to our time, yet when, by his own word, he limits himself, as it were, to this present hour; then we may venture to put him in remembrance, that he hath limited himself to a present hour, and gives us allowance to take him at his word, and say, *Now, now, now*, it is the hour wherein the *dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*.

If any be thinking, it is a long time, even so many hundred years since Christ uttered these words, and said, *Now is the hour*; and therefore, how shall my faith view it with respect to the present hour? Let it be remembred, That as our Lord Jesus lives for ever: so the word of the Lord endureth for ever: and as he hath said, *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*; so as long as time is not swallowed up in eternity, and

as long as his hour-glass of time is running, and his silver trumpet of the gospel blowing, so long you may conclude, that *now* is the hour: yea, there is not an hour of this present day, nor a moment of this present hour, wherein you may not warrantably look up to the Son of God, through the glass of this word, and expect a quickening word from him, and a hearing of his life-giving voice. And now, while he is just saying, The blessed hour that was coming, is *now* come, for quickening the dead; it is well, if any dead soul here that knows its dead state and case, be taking the advantage that the word of the Lord is giving, and taking him at his word, saying, AMEN; Lord, let this be the hour: even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly, with the living and life-giving word; and blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Do your hearts say, AMEN, that this be the very hour and moment of a powerful quickening; then we hope, that now shall it be verified in deed, as well as in word, that "the hour is now come, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear, shall live."

II. The *second* general head proposed, was, To make some *application* of these particulars. I might apply all these six particulars at length, if time allowed; but I only offer a short inference from each.

1. Hence see the *deplorable case of sinners out of Christ*, before they meet with him, and before he meet with them, by his quickening word: they are just, lying dead in the grave of sin and sloth, though naturally alive; and it may be living in pleasure, yet spiritually dead; dead in sin, and dead in law. Many such dead men are among us. O that the spirit of God would convince you that

you are surely dead! Yea, even the case of believers is a heavy case, while they are not hearing and listening to the voice of their Lord: when he is speaking to their hearts they are alive; but whenever he forbears, and they forget his quickening word, deadness seizes them, till he speaks again another word of life, or restore their souls, and bring them back again from the gates of death.

2. Hence see the *marvellous grace of God*, in providing a suitable remedy for such dismal and desperate maladies, as that of spiritual death, and a sentence of eternal death. *The God that quickens the dead, and calls things that are not as though they were*, hath manifested this name of his, in providing for us a quickening Head, a living and life-giving Saviour. He hath anointed and appointed Jesus, his eternal Son, *to give light to whom he will. He hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel*; opening a fountain of living waters with a free proclamation, *Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely.* O what a fit match is Christ for us! A living and life-giving Saviour for dead sinners, in order to their being quickened to a life of grace here, and glory hereafter. But though life be provided in Christ, the Lord of life, yet we have neither life nor power, nor will to come to him for life, till drawing power come from on high. Therefore,

3. Hence see where we ought to go, or to whom we ought to ~~seek~~, for the powerful application of that life and salvation that is provided in Christ. Why, where should we go, but to him in whom all the treasures of life, as well as all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up? *To whom shall we go*, says Peter; *thou hast the words of eter-*

nal life? Even thou whose voice can make the dead to hear and live. He only is the powerful preacher, that preaches to the deaf and dead, and makes them both hear and live. Without this quickening voice of the Son of God, we will be like so many dead corpe and carcases about a communion-table, incapable to eat and drink spiritually: let us look to him for a quickening word. I have read of the lioness, when her young are brought forth dead, that she roars over them till they revive. It is true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he roars over these that are born dead and awakens them to life. O Sirs, do you believe that he is able to speak you to life? *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto him.* His voice is just a word of power. Therefore,

4. Hence see *how* we are to go to him for life; why, just by *hearing his voice* with a believing ear. This is the method of the application, *hear his voice*: you need not go out of your seats, he is near in this word of his; he is speaking to you. O give him a hearing; for God requires you to *hear him*: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* Listen to a voice within a voice; to the voice of Christ within the voice of the minister, This hearing implies faith or belief; and it is a suitable mean for ~~his~~ quickening a dead soul. 1. Because it is the *outgoing* of the soul from itself to what it hears. 2. This mean suits the *forlorn* case of the dead man, that can do nothing for his own quickening, but just hears what the Lord will speak, and is speaking; and what the Lord will do, and is doing; and heartily welcomes him to come, and *do as he hath said*. Hear what the Almighty will say and do; hear not the minister only, but hear

the Master: *Hear, and your souls shall live.*

5. Hence see, what ground there is to hope for a *quickening word*, though the disease be *death itself*, when such assurance is given out of the mouth of Jesus with a double *verily*, and a double *shall be*, with a double oath and a double promise; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." The apostle Paul said in another case, *O death! where is thy sting?* So may we say, in the case of spiritual death and deadness, *O death! where is thy power?* Art thou able to stand before the voice of the Son of God? O dead soul! art thou able to resist the quickening voice of the Son of God? Do you know who is hear speaking, and how he is swearing and promising, that the *dead shall hear and live*? If thou knowest that it is the voice of the Son of God, then, how art thou able to with-hold thy assent to what he is so solemnly affirming? Yea, but I know not, say you, that it is to me he is speaking. Why, what art thou? Art thou truly dead, and free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave? Then thou art the man of whom he speaks, and to whom he says, *The dead shall hear*: behold! the Master calls you, O dead man, dead woman, dead and hardened sinner, who hath been long dead, and rotting, and stinking in the grave; to you he is saying, *Lazarus, come forth*. O poor soul! dost thou hear the voice of the Son of God? Then thou shalt live. Nay, but say you, I do not hear *his* voice; I only hear *your* voice. Well, but remember I am speaking to you in *his name*: therefore, his voice is to be heard within ours: the minister's voice alone will be but a killing voice, a deadning voice; but when you will hear Christ's voice with-

in it, it will quicken, and beget you to a new and living hope. And, O Sirs! Is there not a door of hope you see open in his promise, *The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live.* Why, say you, here is some ground of hope; and, I think, I have some hope of quickening; but I am not quickened. Why, perhaps there is a mistake you are in; one may be quickened to a living faith, and to a lively hope, upon the ground of God's word, and yet think they are not quickened, because they want a lively feeling, and sensible fruition and enjoyment: but as it is matter of praise, if *faith comes by hearing*, though feeling is not yet come: and if one be gotten to a lively hope, though sensible fruition is not yet come: so, in as far as faith and hope are quickened, so far the heart and soul are quickened; therefore, do not think it a small thing, but indeed a great matter, if by the assurance here given from the voice of the Son of God, that the dead shall hear and live, you that was before a dead sinner, and ready to despair of life, be so far quickened by his word, as to be begotten to the hope of life. Why, but say you, *Hope deferred makes the heart sick*, Prov. xiii. 12.: O when, when may I hope to be made alive? Why,

6. And *lastly*, See here the time set to an HOUR; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The HOUR cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Here is, (1.) A door of hope for the *future*; the hour is *coming*. (2.) A door of hope at *present*; the hour is coming, and *now is*: and therefore wait his *coming* hour, and take his *present* hour. 1. Wait his *coming* hour; for he says, "The hour is coming: the Lord is a God of judgment, and

bleſſed are all they that wait for him." If you do ſo, you are ſo far made to hear and live: the waiting ſoul is a living ſoul. 2. Take his *preſent* hour; for he ſays, *It now is*: then take his hour; and believe it is come while he is ſpeaking to you.

Is not the Son of God opening to you juſt now, and to you in particular, the door of faith and hope, while he is ſaying, *Now, the hour is come when the dead ſhall hear and live.* What are you? Are you among the dead? Is that your name? Are you a dead man, a dead woman, a poor dead creature, that neither men nor angels can make alive? Are you deaf as well as dead, ſo as you cannot hear any other voice but a man's voice? Is this your caſe? Is this your name that he is telling you of? Then he is ſpeaking to you by name. What think you, is it you that he is pointing out, as it were, and picking out among all this multitude? Is it your caſe that he is ſpeaking to? Are you conſcious to yourſelf that the watchman hath found you? That the word hath found you out, and named you?

Who then but the Son of God is ſpeaking a word to your caſe juſt now, when the hour is come?—O Sirs, do you hear the voice of the Son of God? Then part of his word is here accompliſhed, *now is the hour when the dead are hearing the voice of the Son of God.*

What! is the Son of God making you to hear, that it is you he is ſpeaking to juſt now? Neither men nor angels know what a dead ſtate and caſe you are into, nor can relieve you. But the Son of God is ſpeaking here; "I who know both the caſe and cure, am ſpeaking to you, man, woman; what a dead heart is that of yours? What a dead ſleep is that you are into, that neither

“word nor rod hath been able to awaken you?
 “But now, since I am speaking to your case, know,
 “that *I who speak unto thee am he; I am the resur-*
 “*rection and the life; he that believeth in me, though*
 “*he were dead, yet shall he live, I am come to give*
 “*life, and to give it more abundantly.*” O tell me,
 do you hear his voice? Then *they that hear shall*
live. Do you believe the hour is now come, when
 the Son of God himself is speaking to you, as a
 dead sinner? Then the hour is indeed come when
 the dead shall hear and live: *Said I not unto thee,*
If thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?

Now is the hour of the day wherein we live, that
 requires his powerful *life-giving presence*; now when
 the devils are raging, and delusions abounding;
 now when defections are growing, and damnable
 errors increasing to a dreadful pitch; now when
 the bottomless pit is opening, and the sun and the
 air are darkened with the smoke of the pit; now
 when the great guns are firing from presses and
 pulpits against a little essay at witnessing and cove-
 nanting work; now when reproaches and bitter
 calumnies are spreading, and enemies crying, *Where*
is your God? Now, when in this generation, it is
 just an hour and power of darkness, the hour and
 power of death, shall we expect a reviving? That
 now is the hour wherein the dead shall hear the
 voice of the Son of God; and now, when so many
 dead souls are here present before the Lord of life,
 the God that quickens the dead, shall we think
 that now is the hour when the dead shall hear and
 live? What shall we say? We may even speak to
 God what we would say, “*It is time for thee, O*
 “*Lord, to work*; it is time for thee to speak to the
 “dead and dry bones, when death is riding in tri-
 “umph: *Come from the four winds, O breath;*

"breathe upon these slain, that they may live," that God may be glorified in exerting his power over death and devils, when matters are brought to an extremity.

Now is the hour for *acting faith* upon the *word of life*, when it is the dead hour of night; when Christ in his cause is crucified, when the grave-stone is laid upon his truth: it is said, *At midnight there was a cry, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.*—It is at midnight he comes in *mercy*, as well as in *judgment*: the midnight hour is his quickening-hour; the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, commands life to arise out of death. If the question be, *Watchman, what of the night?* What hours is it? Oh! is it not the dead hour of the night with you? Why then, now is the fit hour for faith and hope to act upon this great promise of life from the dead. Man, woman, the Master calls you: though you be dead, and *lying in your blood*, he says unto you, *Live*; yea, he says unto you *while lying in your blood, Live.* Tho' you have been lying dead in sin all your days, to this very hour, yet behold now is the accepted time, now is the hour, the happy hour, on which may depend a happy eternity; therefore listen to the voice that speaks from heaven, *O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord*: and if, in hearing with the outward ear, there is a stirring among the dry bones, a shaking, and yet no breath in them, *O refuse not him that speaks from heaven*; turn not away your ear, if you be not a refuser and rejecter of his call: the work of faith with power is a beginning; you cannot contribute a mite of help towards spiritual life in you: but give way to him, who can do all without your help; give way to him while he is yet speaking to you this very hour, and

this hour it is done. Let your heart say, AMEN to his word, while he is saying with a *Verily, verily, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.*

May the almighty Speaker say, AMEN; and let all the people say, AMEN. To his name be praise.

A

PART OF THE DISCOURSE

BEFORE

SERVING OF THE TABLES.

MY friends, public ordinances are of two sorts, *teaching* ordinances, and *sealing* ordinances; the *word* is for teaching, the *sacrament* we have in view is for sealing: the word is for *quicken*ing, or giving life to the *dead*; the sacrament is for *nour*ishing, or maintaining life in the *living*. These that remain dead in sin, lying still in the grave of their natural state, are not capable to eat and drink spiritually at the Lord's table, no more than a dead corpse, set down at a table, can eat or drink naturally. This sacramental feast, therefore, is only designed for these that have been made to *hear the voice of the Son of God, and live*: they only have life to be maintained, and a capacity through grace, to be fed with the flesh and blood of the Son of God; therefore this table of the Lord's must be fenced, &c. The dead are to be debarred, &c. These that are made alive by the word to be invited, &c.

Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat : examine if you have been raised to life by the bearing of Christ's voice ; for this is the mean by which dead souls are raised to life.

If you have been thus raised, then the voice of Christ hath been a *wakening* voice to you, making you see your dead state, and see your sin, and guilt, and filthiness, and folly : it hath made you *turn in*, in order *to turn out* ; to turn in to yourself, and consider your ways ; and then turn out towards the way of the Lord : *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.*

Again, if you have been used to life, by hearing the voice of Christ, then his word hath been a *heart-searching* word ; it hath opened the door of that sepulchre, and let you see into some of the dark chambers of death, and set your secret sins before you ; you have found " the word of the Lord to be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. iv. 12."

Again, if you have been raised to life, by hearing Christ's voice, then this heart hath been a *heart-affecting, heart-breaking, heart-melting* word ; it hath brought you to that, *Oh ! what shall I do to be saved !* Alas ! what have I been doing ? How have I been provoking the wrath of God against me ? It hath broken your heart for sin, and from sin ; your sin hath been set before you, and made to lie heavy upon you. — The man-child of grace is not born without some pangs and throws.

Again, if you have been thus raised to life, it hath been an *enlightening* word ; discovering this to you, that though there is no help in yourself,

yet God hath *laid help upon One that is mighty ; one that is able to save to the uttermost.* This light bears up the soul.

Again, it hath been a *heart-opening* word ; whenever spiritual life is begun, the heart is opened, the soul sees its absolute need of a Saviour, and the willingness of Christ to save and receive poor sinners. A sight of Christ has been like a key, to open your hearts to him, as the heart of Lydia. It hath been a *heart-winning* and *heart-gaining* word ; a *heart-drawing* voice is the mean of raising a dead soul to life, making it to close with him, and follow him ; *His sheep know his voice, and follow him :* they were never made alive, that were not made to follow him.

Again, They are made alive by his word, they live by *faith* upon him, and cannot live without him ; and hence there is such breathing of the soul towards him, such panting and longing after him, *O when wilt thou come unto me ? Haste, my Beloved ; be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*—Hence also they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Again, the voice of Christ, speaking in his word, will be most *sweet* unto you ; *Sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb :* why ? Because his word is not only the *word of truth* that begets his people ; *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth :* but also it is a *word of life* ; and so *nourishing* them up to *everlasting life* : therefore, as *new born babes*, they desire the *sincere milk of the word*, that they may grow thereby. It is the food they live upon ; for, *Men live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God :* they embrace the promises, hugging them, as it ware, in their arms, as being their treasure of securities for hea-

ven and eternal life in Christ, *In whom all the promises are Yea and Amen.*

Where the soul is made alive, by the voice of Christ, the word lives a *stamp* and *impress* of itself; the soul is cast into the mould of the word, Rom. vi. 17. It is a voice that hath an *abiding* efficacy; the soul that is made alive by the word of Christ, never dies again.—He may fall into a dead frame, and think himself in a dead state again, but, as *the word of the Lord endureth for ever*, so the effect of it remains for ever: they can never altogether forget it; *I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me.* The quickened soul can never forget the word of grace, or promise that quickened him: he may lose the sweet and sensible relish of it; but while he is in his wits, he can never quite lose a dark remembrance of it.

Is there any soul here complaining, and sensible of *deadness*, and ready to exclude itself, because dead? This you ought not to do; for, there is some life, where there is some sense of deadness; and they that are wholly dead, have no sense of it at all.

It may be some here have known the time when their souls were *quickened* by the word of Christ; but now that liveliness is quite gone. O believer, why say you it is gone, when this moment you have a living remembrance of it? Do you not remember how he met *with you in Bethel*, and *there he spake with you*?—What a quickening visit he gave, in such and such a place, with such and such a word? Perhaps I no sooner mention this, than you have a quick and lively remembrance of it; why then, thou art not quite dead; *The God of Bethel liveth*; and because he lives, you shall live. O! come and get your life recovered, and nourished at his table.

What though you have no life, nor liveliness at present; yet, are you content that you have life in your glorious Head; that your life is hid with Christ in God; that your whole stock is in his hand, and not in yours; and that you have his promise, his word, his bond, though you have nothing? O Sirs, come, come; for the Lord's sake, come; your life is secure enough: a lively *faith* in his word, is better than a lively *frame* in your heart.



THE DISCOURSE

AT THE
SERVING OF THE FIRST TABLE.

NOW, my friends, as the *word of life* hath been set forth to you as a word to be heard *believingly*; so the same word is now set before you to be handled and tasted *sacramentally*: our eyes may look upon, and our hands may handle, the *word of life*, while *Jesus Christ* is evidently set forth *crucified among us*. In his death we have a fountain of life opened to us: here is the *word of life*, the *bread of life*, the *water of life*; and, may we not add, the *Spirit of life*, we hope, is here? And under his influence, and, according to his warrant, we are to administer to you the symbols of his broken body and shed blood.

“Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and having blessed it, &c.” You that have heard the

voice of the Son of God to the quickening of your dead souls, the same bread of life that you had in the *promise*, you have now among your hands, in a *pledge* for the confirming of your faith, and for the nourishing of your life: while you take the bread in the hand of your body, and eat it with your mouth; take the word in the hand of faith, and hide it in your heart.

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, &c.” Let faith now drink, and drink abundantly of the blood of the covenant; and it is a covenant whereof one great promise is, *That the dead shall hear and live.* This, among the rest, is a promise sealed with the blood of Christ; and there are two things in it that relate to dead sinners. 1. A blessed hearing. 2. A blessed living: *The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live.*

The blessed *hearing*, is a hearing *the voice of the Son of God*: this voice is not a passing sound, but a perpetual word; *The word of the Lord endureth for ever*: as it lasts for ever in the fruit and effect of it; so you may be ever hearing and rejoicing in the faith of his word, saying, “The Lord hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice: thy word was found of me, and I did eat, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” His voice raises the dead; and therefore whenever you find deadness coming upon you, remember his word, and it will restore your soul. *Remember how he spake to you while he was yet in Galilee*; when you was under the fig-tree, he saw you, and spake with you by his word and Spirit; and though he will see you again, and speak with you again; yet, even in the interval of his visit, his word may be your

continual comfort, support, and cordial.

Again, the blessed *living* here promised; *They that hear shall live.* You are not to understand by it a lively passing frame at the time, nor a quickening gale, that is soon over and gone; this *life* or *living* imports infinitely more: it imports everlasting *union* with the living Head; it imports everlasting *righteousness* that you have in him, for your having a life of justification; everlasting *strength* you have in him, for a life of sanctification; everlasting *fulnes* that you have in him, for supplying all your *needs according to his riches in glory*, until you come to the full enjoyment of himself in glory, This is the blessed *living*, for time and eternity, imported in the promise, *They that hear shall live.* They that have a little interest in this world are said to have a *living*; but, O believer, that is not worthy to be named, in one day, with this blessed living you have in Christ and in the promise.

But, for the confirmation of your faith, as there are two things here promised in behalf of the dead, *The dead shall hear, and they that hear shall live*; so, besides the consideration of the Speaker and Promiser here, who is the Son of God, equal with the Father, so as you may be fully persuaded, that what he hath promised he is able to perform; the manner in which he speaks is such, that you have three pair of strong pillars to build your faith and hope upon, two *Verities*, two *Hours*, and two *Shall be's*; for there is not a syllable in that text spoken in vain.

The first pair of pillars to build your faith upon, is two *VERILIES*; *Verily, verily I say unto you.* These two you have to secure you in the blessed hearing and the blessed living here promised to you. One *verity* had been too much con-

descension, for confirming this word, whose bare word is enough to warrant your faith; but, for more security he solemnly swears what he says; *Verily, verily I say unto you.*

2. Another pair of pillars, is TWO HOURS spoke of, for fixing the time wherein you may expect these blessings, namely, a *coming hour*, and a *present hour*; *The hour is coming, and now is.* There is no word of a past hour: whatever blessings you have got out of his hand, and whatever experience you have of his goodness, that is nothing to what is a-coming; and you are to “forget these things that are behind, and reach forward to these things that are before, pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” But the *coming hour* lays a foundation for a *waiting faith*; and the *present hour*, a foundation for a *taking faith*.

What better ground can you have for a *waiting faith* than this, that Christ says, *The hour is coming*? Though deadness of heart and frame should again seize you; *The hour is coming, when the dead shall again hear the voice of the Son of God, and live.* More and more of this blessed hearing and living is to be expected, as long as his word lasts, and as long as he himself liveth; and behold *his word endureth for ever, and he lives for ever and ever*: therefore, wait his hour; and expect always more and more a-coming from him that says, *The hour is coming.*

Again, what better ground have you for a *taking faith*, or a present applying faith, than his saying, the hour is not only coming, but that *now it is*; now when he is speaking to you, and now when you are sitting at his table. Now is the hour, the present hour for taking what he is giving; take his word for it, though death and deadness be in

the way, that the *dead shall hear his voice*. Is it a present hour of deadness and darkness with you? Why, but he is saying, *The hour is come, when the dead shall hear*: take his word, by hearing his voice and believing his word; *Hear, and your souls shall live*. Is it his present hour of giving you his word? Then it should be your present hour of taking his word. The communicating hour is his giving hour, and your taking hour: you have been taking the sign; and, I hope, you are for taking the thing signified, his word and himself; and the *life* and *living* that he gives. As long as he is saying, *the hour is now come*, you have the warrant for the present acting of faith. *Now is the accepted time*: and as long as Christ is saying, *Now is the hour*: there is room for present faith, present receiving, present application to the throne for present help.

3. Another pair of pillars to build upon is, two **SHALLS**, OR **SHALL BE'S** in the text; *The dead SHALL hear, and they that hear, SHALL live*. If God had given you but a *may be*, faith might rely upon it, as when he says, "It may be you shall be hid in the day of his wrath. It may be God will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." His *may be* is a foundation for faith; but when he says, *It shall be*, and doubles it, there is no room for doubting.

The two *shall*s here seem to relate to two *lives*, or two parts of life, *The dead shall hear*: there is *one life*, namely, *life to hear*: for the dead cannot hear till they get life; so that it is a promise of the Spirit of life; putting life into the dead soul, that it may hear the voice of the Son of God. Again, *They that hear shall live*: there is *another life*; namely, *life to live*; life to live a spiritual life, and an eternal life. Though life be given you, you cannot live, unless the same power maintain life,

that at first infused it. Here then, is *hearing life*, and *living life* promised; life to hear, and life to live: and therefore there is a *shall be*, for each of them; *The dead shall hear, and they that hear, shall live.*

And, O believer, how great is the goodness of God to you, that under these *shall be's*, in the text, are comprehended all the sweet *shall be's* in the covenant of promise, that you stand in need of!—You have a double *shall be* for your provision and support in the wilderness; *Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.*—You have a *shall be* for your protection in dangerous times; *The place of your defence, shall be the munition of rocks.*—You have a *shall be* for the Spirit to quicken you from time to time, in the way of duty, and in case of decays and deadness; “The water I will give you, shall be in you a well of water springing up to everlasting life.”—You have a *shall be* for a cordial to you when you pass through the valley of the shadow of death, *That death shall be swallowed up of victory.*—You have a *shall be* for your happy welcome at the day of judgment; *They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels.*—And a *shall be* for a happy eternity; for the word says, *So shall we be ever with the Lord.*—Here is good food for the present, and food for the time to come: Here is feeding for you in evil days, in days of error, corruption, defection, reproaches, blasphemy, snares, temptations, and delusions, and threatened desolations. O Sirs, is it not good to have some of God's *shall be's* to look to such as that, “Upon all the glory there shall be a defence.” Again, “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, the Lord will be found.” And again, “A man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest;

as rivers of water in a dry place; and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." They shall have, as we use to speak, the calm side of the bush whatever way the wind bloweth, whatever air the storm beats, that live by faith upon this man, this IMMANUEL, God-man: *For this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land; when the bloody sword, that is drawn abroad, may pass over, and our apostate land become a field of blood: it is safest resting in the bosom of a promising God.*

XX

SOME NOTES

OF A

DISCOURSE,

AT THE

CONCLUSION OF THE SOLEMN WORK,

ON THE SAME THEME.

O BELIEVER, when you want sensible quickenings, yet you may live well enough, by listening to the voice of Christ, and giving credit to what he says. He is not always the strongest believer who hath most of sensible presence: weak faith may need these stilts and supports, while strong faith can stand without a staff, and walk without crutches. Indeed the life of the best saints, in this world, is but a falling and a rising; but they stand most firm who stand by faith upon the

promise of life they have in Christ Jesus, even when they want the feeling of life, or liveliness: they live nobly who have even a feeling of death in themselves, and yet faith of life in Christ; *We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead;* 2 Cor. i. 9. Many never think they have sensible joys and comforts: but if that were all their life that they have, what a little short, transient, passing life is it? But they that live by faith, they live upon the fulness of grace and life they have in Christ, and upon his word that endureth for ever. They live more upon what they hear, than what they feel; yea, most upon what they hear, for, *as faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;* so faith lives by hearing the voice of the Son of God; and therefore it lives in the sight of death: and in spite of death: *For the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live.* Therefore, when the shadows of death surround you, the shortest cut to a new reviving, is to hear the voice of Christ, and to listen to what he says, *That the dead shall hear, and live.* Look not unto yourselves, or your own heart, or frame, to seek for life there; that is but a seeking *the living among the dead;* it is to seek life in the house of death: but listen believingly to the voice of Christ, who says, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* He can speak you to life in a moment: therefore, still remember who he is that speaketh to you from heaven; that he is the Son of God, who hath all the grace of God, the fulness of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, and the life of God. This hearing of him, as the Son of God, and the Sent of God, to give life to the dead, is God's mean and ordin-

ance for quickening the dead: the hope of life is begotten in a moment this way; and, I hope some are conscious this day that it is so.

What! have you no hope, that you who are dead shall be made alive? Is this such a great matter? But, O Sirs, you will not think so much of that, if you hear the voice of the Son of God, from heaven, saying, *I was dead, and am alive: I the eternal Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, I borrowed your human nature, that I might die for your sins, that I might be the death of living sins, and the life of dead souls: I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I live for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death, Rev. i. 18. I have the power of the keys, to shut the gates of death, and open the gates of life: therefore, when I am uttering my voice and speaking to you, think it not strange, that the dead shall hear and live; therefore, Hear, and your souls shall live. Awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust of death.*

O! may we hope that some ears have been opened to hear, and some hearts have been quickened, by hearing the voice of the Son of God this day? O happy hour, wherein this life-giving voice is heard!

The voice of the Son of God, in the gospel, is not a *killing* but a *quickening* voice; it neither destroys souls nor bodies: and hence it cannot be the voice of the Son of God, that casts down bodies into dead fits, and dread-like distortions and disorders: whose voice can this be? Oh! how awful is the delusion of the day! that work cried up for a work of the Spirit of God, that instead of *quickening*, hath a *killing* influence upon bodies and souls both!

How delusive is the work that dashes people down into dead fits, and then raises them with raptures, and yet leaves them as they were before, if not worse enemies to God, and to the work of God, the most glorious work of reformation that ever God wrought for this land, and carried on by solemn covenanting! The quickening voice of the Son of God never tended to destroy the life of bodies, nor to destroy the concern of souls about his declarative glory, and about confessing him and his cause.

The gospel of the grace of God it cannot be, (whatever legal thunders may do) that tends to destroy the life of the body, and also to kill the life of the soul, by destroying all soul-concern about public reformation, and the declarative glory of God, and to turn people desperate enemies to the present covenanted work, and witnessing work, against the too palpable defections of the day.

O seek, my friends, to be delivered from the strange delusions, the strange deities, the strange gods of the times wherein you live. Besides, the evident terrors of the time, some that profess to be contending against errors, which is so far right and well done; yet are plunged over head and ears, in the gulf of new imaginary doctrines of their own; particularly, that strange doctrine of *imaginary ideas of Christ as man*. O beware, beware, of an imaginary idea of Christ as man, and of reckoning this to be knowledge or faith! For, that is nothing but a dead image of Christ in the brain, and is no part of rational knowledge, far less of revealed religion. As long as you have but an imaginary idea of Christ as *man*, you have no view of the *person* of Jesus Christ; for Christ, as man, was never a person; the eternal Son of God,

in our nature, is the *person* of our IMMANUEL. While you look to a Christ painted in the fancy, as man, his voice will never quicken your dead souls; but when, by faith, you look to the man Christ, as IMMANUEL, God-man, and listen to his voice, as it is the voice of the Son of God, then the *dead shall hear, and hearing shall live.*

O cry mightily to God, that the hour which Christ says is *coming, and now is*, may not pass over without your *hearing the voice of the Son of God.* The hours of the natural day are passing; and so are the hours of the gospel day. The conjunction of the word and Spirit of Christ makes up that blessed hour, that happy nick and season of salvation, the time of *love*, and the time of *life*; *There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; this river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb: every thing liveth, whithersoever the river cometh, Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10.* Therefore, cry for the promised Spirit, the promised run of that river; *I will pour waters on the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground, Isaiah xlv. 3.* There are signal periods of the Spirit, and happy seasons wherein Christ utters his almighty voice in the word. When such a season cometh, it is an hour that is ever to be remembered; it opens up secrets that were in God's bosom from eternity, and brings to light the cabinet councils of heaven; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost," 1 Theff. i. 4, 5. This is the hour of spiritual resurrection; a greater and a more glorious resurrection than that of your bodies at the last day; even as much greater as the value of the soul is above that of the body;

and because the blessedness of your bodily resurrection depends upon this spiritual resurrection by the voice of Christ: and terrible will the voice of Christ be at the resurrection of your bodies, unless you first hear this vital voice of Christ quickening you to a spiritual life.—Therefore, O cry to God, that the gospel hour may not pass over without a quickening power coming along with the word, making it sink deep into your heart, as well as found in your ear. If a heart-concern of this sort were created in you, it would argue some beginnings of *life from the dead*, and some *hope in Israel* concerning you.

T H E E N D.



52
*A Song of praise, for electing, regenerating, and re-
deeming grace, and all spiritual blessings in Christ.*
Eph. i. 3,—7.

BLESS'D be the everlasting God
And Father of our Lord,
Who us in him, and through his blood,
With heav'nly blessings stor'd.

“My Son's mine elect first,” he said,
Before he chose a man;
Then chose he us, in Christ our Head,
Before the world began.

Our characters were then decreed
That we should holy be,
Blameless in love, a royal seed,
From sin and slav'ry free:

Predestinated to be sons,
A new regen'rate race;
Born by degrees, though chose but once,
To praise his glorious grace.

Here his accepting love began
In Christ, to stand unmov'd,
And firm to us, until he can
Forget his first Belov'd;

In whom we have redemption great,
Peace, pardon, and solace;
Bought with the richest blood, and yet
Brought from the richest grace.

F I N I S.